

OBADIAH

INTRODUCTION

The name Obadiah means "servant of Jehovah." He is one of four prophets about whom we know absolutely nothing except that he wrote prophecy. The other three prophets are Habakkuk, Haggai, and Malachi. These four prophets are cloaked in anonymity. Obadiah is like a ghost writer in that he is there, but we do not know him. He lived up to his name, for he was a servant of Jehovah. A servant boasts of no genealogy neither exploits nor experiences. He doesn't push himself forward. He has to demonstrate by what he does that he can even claim the place of a servant. So Obadiah is just a prophet who wrote one of the great prophecies of the Scripture. Dr. Pusey said, "God has willed that his name alone and this brief prophecy should be known to the world." Obadiah is a little book, but it is an example of an atomic bomb in the Bible. It is a small thing, but it has a potent message.

The chief difficulty with the prophecy of Obadiah is where to fit it into the history of the nation Israel. There are some who give the date of 887 B.C., which fixes the time during the reign of Jehoram and the bloody Athaliah (see [2Kings 8:16-26](#)). Dr. Pusey placed it during the reign of Jehoshaphat (see [2Chron. 17:7](#)). Although the name Obadiah does occur in this passage, it was a common name in that day and probably was not the same Obadiah who wrote this prophecy. Canon Farrar gave the date as 587 B.C., and Dr. Moorehead concurred in this, suggesting that Obadiah was probably a contemporary of Jeremiah's. The whole question seems to hinge on [verse 11](#): "In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them." Either this was written as prophecy before it happened or it is a historical record of what did happen. The natural interpretation, of course, is to accept it as history rather than prophecy, which places the date of Obadiah's prophecy around 587 B.C., after the Babylonian captivity and during the ministry of the prophet Jeremiah.

The little kingdom of Edom is the subject of this brief prophecy. [Verse 6](#) is the key verse: "How are the things of Esau searched out! how are his hidden things sought up!"

Outline

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(Poetic justice [lex talionis] -- law of retaliation)

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("And the kingdom shall be the Lord's")

Chapter 1

THEME: Edom -- destruction; and Israel -- restoration

Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament -- only twenty-one verses. There are many folk who feel that this book is not worth reading and that if it were omitted from the Bible, it would not be missed. However, the brevity of the message does not render it less important or less significant. Like the other Minor Prophets, the message is primary, it is pertinent, it is practical, and it is poignant. It is a message that can be geared into this day in which we are living.

None of these so-called Minor Prophets are extinct volcanoes; rather, they are distinct action. There is no cold ash in any of them; they are spewing hot lava. Obadiah's prophecy is of devastating judgment against the little kingdom of Edom.

Charge Against Edom (1:1-9)

The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning Edom;
We have heard a rumor from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent
among the heathen, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in
battle [[Obad. 1:1](#)].

Obadiah tells us immediately, bluntly, and to the point that this is a vision given to him by God Himself.

Who is Obadiah? As I mentioned in the Introduction, he is one of the minor prophets about whom we know absolutely nothing. His name was a very common one in Israel, and it means "servant of Jehovah."

"Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning Edom." Edom is the key to this little book, and so we shall have to go back to Genesis to determine the identity of Edom. In Genesis, where we have the record of the generations of Esau, notice this comment: "Now these are the generations of Esau, who is Edom" ([Gen. 36:1](#)). Also this: "Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir: Esau is Edom. And these are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in mount Seir" ([Gen. 36:8-9](#)).

That is the record that is given to us here, and it is repeated three times. Although I am sure Moses did not know, the Spirit of God knew that this would need to be emphasized - - Esau is Edom and Edom is Esau. The Edomites were those who were descended from Esau, just as the Israelites are those who are descended from Jacob.

The story of Esau is that of twin brothers, sons of Isaac and Rebekah. The boys were not identical twins; actually, they were opposites. The record given back in [Genesis 25](#) begins as Rebekah is about to give birth to these twins: "And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the LORD. And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger" ([Gen. 25:22-23](#)). From the very beginning these two brothers were struggling against each other. Esau was an outdoor fellow who loved to hunt. Jacob would rather stay in the house and learn to cook. He was

tied to his mamma's apron strings. However, Jacob had a spiritual discernment that Esau did not have. Esau was a man of the flesh and did not care for spiritual things. In fact, he so discounted his birthright that he traded it to Jacob for a bowl of soup! "And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright" ([Gen. 25:30-34](#)).

He didn't sell his birthright because he was so hungry that he was about to perish, nor because there wasn't anything else to eat in the home of Isaac, but because his was a desire of the flesh and he was willing to trade all of his spiritual heritage for a whim of the moment. The man who had the birthright was in contact with God, and he was the priest of his family. He was the man who had a covenant from God. He was the man who had a relationship with God. In effect Esau said, "I would rather have a bowl of soup than have a relationship with God."

This is an illustration of a great truth for believers today. It is a picture of Christians. A believer has two natures within him, and they are struggling with each other and against each other. In [Galatians 5:17](#) Paul says, "For the flesh lusteth [wars] against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." These are the two natures of the believer, the new nature and the old nature. They are opposed to each other. Esau pictures the flesh, the old nature, and Jacob pictures the spirit, the new nature.

The name Edom means "red or sunburned." A sunburn occurs when the skin is able to absorb the rays of light except the rays that make it red. The sunburned man in Scripture is the man who could not absorb the light of heaven, and it burned him. My friend, the light of heaven will either save you or burn you. You will either absorb it, or you will be burned by it. This is always true. Esau represented the flesh. He became Edom. Jacob, who became Israel, a prince with God, represents the spirit.

Having seen Esau in the first book of the Old Testament, look now at the last book of the Old Testament and read this strange language: "I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau . . ." ([Mal. 1:2-3](#)). This is a strange thing for God to say -- "I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau." It immediately presents a problem.

A student once approached Dr. Griffith Thomas with this question, "Dr. Thomas, I am having a problem with this statement in Malachi. I cannot understand why God says He hated Esau." Dr. Thomas replied, "Young man, I am having a problem with that verse also, but my problem is different from yours. I can understand why He hated Esau, but I cannot understand why He loved Jacob."

Well, the thing that lends importance to the little Book of Obadiah is that it is the only place in the Word of God where we find the explanation of why God hated Esau.

Ginsburg, the great Hebrew scholar, translated [Obadiah 1:6](#) like this: "How are the things of Esau stripped bare!" In other words, they are laid out in the open for you to look at for the first time. Obadiah puts the microscope down on Esau, and when you look through the eyepiece you see Edom. Not only did Obadiah focus the microscope on him, but Obadiah is God's microscope! Come here and look through the microscope. Look! One Esau -- oh, he is magnified! -- one Esau is now 250,000 little Esaus, and that is Edom. The photographer takes a miniature and makes a great enlarged picture. He says, "I blew up the picture." Obadiah is the "blown up" picture of Esau. You inflate a tire tube to find a tiny leak in it. Just so, Obadiah presents Esau inflated so that you can see where the flaw is in his life, and you can see why God said He hated him. What at the beginning was a little pimple under the skin is now a raging and angry cancer. What was small in Esau is now magnified 100,000 times in the nation. God did not say at the beginning that He hated Esau; He had to wait until he became a nation and revealed the thing that caused God to hate him.

God never said that He hated Esau or loved Jacob until He came to the last book in the Old Testament. Both men have become nations, Edom and Israel. Israel has been mightily used of God through the centuries. Israel produced men like Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Hezekiah, Nehemiah, Ezra, and on down the line. But the nation that came from Esau became a godless nation. Edom turned its back upon God, and what was it that caused God to hate Esau and to hate the nation?

Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised [[Obad. 1:2](#)].

This great people -- they were a great people, as we are going to see in this book -- are now going to be brought down. Obadiah gives this as a prophecy which looks to the future, but from where we stand today, we see that it has been fulfilled.

What was the great sin of Edom which brought about God's judgment upon her?

The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? [[Obad. 1:3](#)].

"The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee." What was it for which God hated Edom? It was pride. I am confident that, the minute I say this, the wind is taken out of the sails of many of my readers. They are going to say, "Is that all? Pride is bad, but it's not that bad, is it?"

Let me illustrate to you how we today have things all out of proportion concerning sin. Suppose that I knew of a certain Christian who was drinking very heavily and that I came to ask your advice as to what his church should do with him. I am sure that you would say that he ought to be put out of the membership of the church, and I would agree with you. Now suppose that I told you of an officer in a church who was caught by the police the other night in a supermarket as he was breaking into the safe. I'm sure that you would say he ought to be put out of the church and that he ought to be disciplined. I'd agree with you on that. Suppose, though, that I told you that I knew of a certain church member who was filled with pride, who was one of the proudest persons I had ever met. I dare say that you would not suggest that he be put out of the church. Many who have a very tender

heart would say, "I think the pastor should talk to him and tell him that it's wrong to have pride. But it's not such a bad sin after all. At least, it's one that doesn't show. It's not like getting drunk; it's not like stealing; it's not like lying." Would I surprise you if I told you that in the sight of God, pride is a much worse sin than getting drunk? Now the Bible does have a great deal to say about the sin of drunkenness. God condemns drunkenness. It contributed to the downfall of Israel, Babylon, the kingdom of Alexander the Great, and Rome. It has brought down all the great nations, and it will bring down our nation. But, may I say to you, in God's sight, pride is worse than drunkenness. This is something which gets right down to where we live today. This is right where the bat hits the ball. This is where the plane of your life and my life touches down on the runway of the life of God. We are given here a proper perspective concerning pride. Pride is the sin of sins. It is one of the worst sins of all. It is something that Scripture condemns above everything. God has said that He hates pride, and if that is the thing that Edom is eaten up with, God can say, "Esau have I hated because of his pride."

Notice what the writer of the Proverbs says: "These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him." And then he gives us the list: (1)"A proud look"; (2)"a lying tongue"; (3)"hands that shed innocent blood"; (4)"an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations"; (5)"feet that be swift in running to mischief"; (6)"a false witness that speaketh lies"; and (7)"and he that soweth discord among brethren" ([Prov. 6:16-19](#)). Do you see what is number one on God's hate parade? A proud look. When a man or woman walks into church and looks at some poor saint who is known to have committed a sin, and that man lifts his head and puts his nose in the air, or the woman draws her skirts about her, that, in the sight of God, is worse than getting drunk. This is not to condone drunkenness; it is saying that drunkenness is bad, but pride is much worse.

This is not all that God has to say about pride. God says that He resists the proud, but He is always on the side of the humble. "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate" ([Prov. 8:13](#)). John tells us, ". . . the pride of life, is not of the Father . . ." ([1John 2:16](#)). Where does the pride of life come from? If there is anything that comes from the Devil, that is it.

A great many saints today have pride of race, pride of face, and pride of grace -- they are even proud they have been saved by grace! My friend, your salvation ought not to make you proud, it is not even something to brag about. It is something about which to glorify God, and it is something that should humble you. Aren't you ashamed of yourself that you have to be saved by grace because you are such a miserable sinner? I wish I had something to offer God for salvation, but I have nothing. Therefore, I must be saved by grace, and I cannot even boast of that. There are too many folk boasting of the fact that they have been sinners. God gives grace to the humble. Paul writes, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 2:5](#)). What kind of mind did He have? Lowliness of mind. He said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart . . ." ([Matt. 11:29](#)). Pride is that which is destroying the testimony of many Christians and has made them very ineffective for God. They go in for show, but the thing they are building is a big haystack. They are not building on the foundation of Christ with gold and silver and precious stones. Pride has a great many saints down for the count of ten; it has pinned the shoulders of many to the mat today.

Pride, after all, was the sin of Satan. He said, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will be like the most High" (see [Isa. 14:13-14](#)). Pride was also actually the root of Nebuchadnezzar's insanity. He strutted like a peacock in the palace of his kingdom of Babylon. "The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" ([Dan. 4:30](#)). And what happened to Nebuchadnezzar? "While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field . . ." ([Dan. 4:31-32](#)). That was no accident, my friend. The psychologists today would call Nebuchadnezzar's condition hysteria which leads to a form of amnesia. This man did not know who he was, and he went out and acted like an animal of the field. Why? Because, when a man is lifted up with pride, he's not lifted up but has come down to the level of beasts. God debased Nebuchadnezzar and brought him down to the level of the beasts of the field.

What is pride? Let me give you a definition of it: Pride of heart is the attitude of a life that declares its ability to live without God. We find here in the Book of Obadiah that pride of heart had lifted up this nation of Edom just like Esau who had despised his birthright. Even in the home of Isaac, where there was plenty to eat, he liked that bowl of soup, and he liked it more than he liked his birthright. He didn't care for God at all. In despising that birthright, he despised God. And now Esau had become a great nation that had declared its ability to live without God.

"Thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?" He lived in a very unique place. He lived in the rocky mountain fastness of the rock-hewn city of Petra. It is still in existence today and can be viewed. Many who see it are overwhelmed by the size of the city. It is a ready-made city hewn out of the rock. It is protected by the entrance way which is very narrow in places. A horse and rider can get through but with just a bit of twisting and turning. It was, therefore, a city which could easily be defended. Everything was secure. It was like the First National Bank in that many of the nations of the world deposited vast sums of gold and silver there because they felt that the city could never be taken.

They dwelt "in the clefts of the rock." They were living in great buildings which were hewn out of solid rock inside this great canyon and up and down the sides of it. They were perfectly secure -- at least they thought they were. The Edomites had signed a declaration of independence. They had a false sense of security and had severed all relationship with God. They had seceded from the government of God. They had revolted and rebelled against Him.

Now what is God going to do in a case like this?

Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD [[Obad. 1:4](#)].

"Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle." The eagle is used in Scripture as a symbol of deity. The Edomites were going to overthrow God as Satan had attempted to do, and they were going to become deity. They were going to handle the business that God was

supposed to handle. "And though thou set thy nest among the stars" -- this was the sin of Satan, for he sought to exalt his throne above the stars. God says, "Thence will I bring thee down."

How many people today are attempting to run their lives as if they were God? They feel that they don't need God, and they live without Him. The interesting thing is that when God made us He did not put a steering wheel on any of us. Why? Because He wants to guide our lives. He wants us to come to Him for salvation first, and then He wants to take charge of our lives. When you and I run our lives, we are in the place of God. We are in the driver's seat. We are the ones who are the captains of our own little ships or our own little planes, and we are going through the water or the air just to suit ourselves. That is pride, and anyone who reaches that position, if he continues in it, is committing a sin which is fatal because it means he will go into a lost eternity.

Will you come now and look down into the microscope again? Edom is the incarnation of Esau. There stands Esau. What do you see? You see a human animal; you see animalism in the raw. Oh, the terrifying ugliness of it all! At this point you may say to me, "I thought we descended from animals, but here you are saying that men act like animals." That is exactly what I am saying, my friend. We didn't descend up, we descended down. There has been no ascension, there has been a descension.

The teaching of evolution as a fact of science is the greatest delusion of the twentieth century. When we do come out of the fog, the unbeliever will move to another explanation for the origin of things. Actually, evolution does not give the origin of things at all. It has been accepted by the average man as gospel truth because he has been brainwashed through radio, television, our schools, and our publications to believe that evolution is a proven fact -- and it absolutely is not. The strong and intelligent objections that have been given by reliable scientists are entirely ignored today. I am not going to discuss the pros and cons of evolution -- that is not my point -- but it is something that I became interested in even before I was sixteen years of age. I had a great desire to read and study, and I appealed to the wrong man, a minister who was a liberal, and he urged me to read Darwin. I read *The Origin of Species*, *The Descent of Man*, and other miscellaneous papers. I studied it, of course, later in college and again in a denominational seminary. At the seminary they taught theistic evolution, which is probably the most absurd of all interpretations of the origin of things. I want to say to you that I totally reject the godless propaganda of evolution -- this idea that it is from mud to man, from protoplasm to personality, from amoeba to animation! I would like to dismiss the argument with a quotation from Dr. Edwin Conklin, the biologist, who said: "The probability of life originating from accident is comparable to the probability of the unabridged dictionary resulting from an explosion in a printing shop." That is good enough for me.

The chief difficulty with the theory of evolution is its end results. Evolution leads to an awful, fatal pessimism. It leads man to believe that he has arrived, that he is something, that he is actually up at the top; and that belief has led to a fatal pessimism today. That pessimism is seen in our colleges and in the alarming rate of suicide among young people. I attribute it to the teaching of evolution. It was Dr. Albert Einstein who made this statement: "The man who regards his own life and that of his fellow creatures as

meaningless is not merely unfortunate but almost disqualified for life." That is a good statement.

If you want to see how this teaching has affected men, listen to the poetry of the late Wystan Hugh Auden:

Were all the stars to disappear or die,
I should learn to look at an empty sky
And feel its total dark sublime,
Though this might take me a little time.

How pessimistic! And then he added this:

Looking up at the stars, I know quite well
That, for all they care, I can go to hell.

May I say to you, that is pessimism, and that is the thinking to which evolution has led.

But wait just a minute! The startling and amazing thing is that the little Book of Obadiah is God's trenchant answer to evolution, and this is the reason He said what He did about Edom.

On Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles there are what are known as the La Brea Tar Pits, where they have also now built a great museum. The tar pits and this museum are a tourist attraction in Southern California. When I first came to California as a tourist, I went there when it was just a small museum. The museum showed, according to the scientists, how man lived one hundred thousand to two hundred thousand years ago in California. They showed that he lived like an animal and that he looked like an animal, according to the picture that they displayed. By the way, they didn't have a photograph of him. The fellow must have turned around before they could get the picture! Of course, they didn't have a photograph but composed an imaginary picture of him.

God has something to say to us, my friend. Will you hear me carefully? Why go back one hundred thousand years? Right this moment, if you were to ride down that same Wilshire Boulevard, you would see men and women who are living like animals. They don't look like animals -- some of them are called "the beautiful people" -- but they are living like animals. The fact is that they have come down from the high plane where God had created them to the plane where they do not depend on God. Not only do they live like animals, they live lower than animals. No animal gets drunk or beats his wife or shoots his children or murders or practices homosexuality. Only mankind does that. Man lives in our day lower than animals, and they were living like that yonder in Edom in Obadiah's day.

You may have heard the story of the pig in Kentucky that got out of its pen, wandered out in the woods, and found a still. Mash had leaked out of this still, and the pig began to eat it and also to drink the liquid leaking out with it. The pig got drunk, and I mean drunk. He couldn't walk, and he sprawled right down in the mud. He stayed there for twenty-four hours until he sobered up. Then as he started off grunting, he was heard to say, "I'll never play the man again."

Or, as someone else has expressed it:

How well do I remember,
'Twas in the bleak December
As I was strolling down the street in manly pride,
When my heart began to flutter
And I fell into a gutter,
And a pig came up and lay down by my side.
As I lay there in the gutter,
My heart still all a-flutter,
A man passing by did chance to say,
"You can tell a man that boozes
By the company he chooses,"
And the pig got up and slowly walked away.
-- Unknown

No, my friend, man has not evolved from the animal world. Tremendous though his achievements are, man can sink lower than an animal when he determines that he is going to live without God.

Remember that God said to the Edomites: "Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down."

Obadiah continues to set forth the complete destruction of Edom --

If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off!)
would they not have stolen till they had enough? if the
grapegatherers came to thee, would they not leave some grapes?
[\[Obad. 1:5\]](#).

Obadiah is saying that if a thief came to rob them, he would take only what he wanted -- he wouldn't take everything. That would also be true of a grape gatherer -- he would leave some grapes. But God said to Edom, "When I judge you, the destruction will be complete."

How are the things of Esau searched out! how are his hidden things
sought up! [\[Obad. 1:6\]](#).

This is the key verse to the Book of Obadiah. "How are the things of Esau searched out!" Let me repeat that Ginsburg, the Hebrew scholar, translates this, "How are the things of Esau stripped bare!" Or, as we have put it, God has put Esau under a microscope, and God says, "Come look. Look through the Word of God, and look at this man. I hate him. Why do I hate him? It is because of his pride of life. He has turned his back on Me and has declared his ability to live without Me." That is the pride of life, my friend.

"How are his hidden things sought up!" Frankly, when I read the story of Esau back in the Book of Genesis, I don't quite understand it, but although I missed it in Genesis, I sure don't miss it here. I can now take the microscope and go back and look at Esau and see why he wanted to trade his birthright for a bowl of soup. It was for the very simple reason that the birthright meant he would be the priest in the family and it meant a relationship to God. Frankly, Esau would rather have had a bowl of soup than to have had a relationship with God. When you reach that place, my friend, you have sunk to the level of the pig that got down in the gutter.

All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee even to the border: the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, and prevailed against thee; they that eat thy bread have laid a wound under thee: there is none understanding in him [[Obad. 1:7](#)].

Edom was a nation which all the enemies of that day just passed by. They just couldn't be bothered with him because he was safely holed up in the rock-hewn city of Petra. However, Nebuchadnezzar was able to get the city. Just as God used Nebuchadnezzar to destroy Jerusalem, the city of Jacob's sons who had turned from God, He used Nebuchadnezzar also to reach in and take Edom, the nation of Esau's sons.

Shall I not in that day, saith the LORD, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau? [[Obad. 1:8](#)].

Not only was Edom noted for the fact that they were well protected in their rocky mountain fastness, in the beautiful city of Petra, but they also had developed a wisdom and learning and superstition. Petra was a pagan center where there were many "pillar cults." Expeditions have excavated the great high place on top of the mountains round about Petra where bloody human sacrifices had been offered. Also Edom was famous for its wisdom. Job's friend, Eliphaz, was a Temanite (see [Job 4:1](#)). People traveled from afar to hear the wisdom of its wise men (see [Jer. 49:1](#)). God says that He will destroy the wise men out of Edom and understanding out of the mount of Esau.

And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter [[Obad. 1:9](#)].

"Teman" takes its name from a grandson of Esau and is located in the southern portion of Edom. The Temanites were noted for their courage.

Crime Of Edom (1:10-14)

In [verses 10](#) through 14, Obadiah is going to give a list or a catalog of the reasons that God is going to destroy Edom. The pride of life, we have said, was their great sin, but it led also to the committing of other sins. Pride is an attitude, but it is an attitude that you cannot conceal very long. It is going to break out like a running cancer because it is such a tremendous driving force in man. Your philosophy of life is going to gradually work its way down into your fingers, your feet, your eyes, and all your senses. You are going to express that philosophy in some way. If you are godless, you are going to lead a godless life. If you are godly, you are going to lead a godly life -- that naturally follows. Therefore, Obadiah is now going to spell out the terrible sins that came from Edom's pride of life.

You must remember at this point that Esau and Jacob were brothers, twin brothers, although not identical but opposites. They did grow up in the same family and had the same father and mother. There was a struggle between them from the very beginning. There was a hatred and a bitterness that was never healed. It was never healed even when they became two great nations.

We find, however, that God had something to say to His people about their relationship to Edom. In [Psalm 137:7](#) we read, "Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof." Edom, instead of befriending Israel in the dark hour when the Babylonians destroyed that nation, stood on the sidelines and, in fact, became the cheering section, urging the Babylonians on in their brutalities. But God had said to Israel at the very beginning, when they came into the land, "Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he is thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a stranger in his land" ([Deut. 23:7](#)). Israel's tie with the Edomite was greater -- he was his brother, a blood brother -- and because of that, God said they were not to hate him. However, we will see that Edom manifested a hatred and bitterness toward Israel throughout the entire length of the history of their nation.

There are five specific actions mentioned here which are derived from pride, from their attitude that they could live without God.

The first one is violence --

For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee,
and thou shalt be cut off for ever [[Obad. 1:10](#)].

Two things were to happen to them. (1) "Shame shall cover thee." Finally, Babylon was able to capture the city of Petra and take the inhabitants into captivity. There was a period in which they were a captive people. (2) "Thou shalt be cut off for ever." Edom as a nation would be utterly destroyed. It is interesting that in our day we hear a great deal about Israel but nothing whatever about Edom.

Edom was a nation that attempted to live without God, and they were a violent, warlike people. Violence is not God's method. In my country we have discovered that very little can be settled by war and violence. It does not finally settle any matter at all.

The second charge against Edom is that they joined the enemies of Israel --

In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the
strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered
into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as
one of them [[Obad. 1:11](#)].

Instead of attempting to befriend and help the people of Israel, to whom they were related by blood, they went over to the side of the brutal enemy which had invaded the land.

But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the
day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have
rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction;
neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress
[[Obad. 1:12](#)].

They rejoiced over the calamity that had come to Judah. That is always an action of pride. When you hear someone rejoicing over the trouble that another individual is having, you may be sure that you are listening to someone who is very proud. Pride is something that God says He hates.

Now the fourth heartless action of the Edomites is looting --

Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity [[Obad. 1:13](#)].

Not only did they join with the enemy against Israel, but they actually moved in to loot and plunder after the enemy had taken Israel away into captivity.

My friend, pride will lead a man to do some terrible things, and one of them is to steal. Many a man, in order to keep up a front in his business or to keep up with the fellows at the club, will resort to dishonest methods. Also, many a man, in order to win a woman as his wife, will actually resort to dishonest methods. Our contemporary society is honeycombed with dishonesty. What is our problem? Well, the root problem is pride. A proud man, living his life apart from God, will drift into this sort of thing.

The Bible is still the best book on psychology. It will get down to the root of the problem in the human heart. Let's forget all these little psychological courses on how to improve ourselves and, rather, get back to the Word of God. Perhaps you did not realize that in the little Book of Obadiah you would find the root of the thing that is leading our own nation to self-destruction -- pride, the attitude of life that declares its ability to live without God.

Now here is the fifth action that springs from pride --

Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress [[Obad. 1:14](#)].

In my opinion, this is their lowest action -- they hit bottom when they did this. In this they revealed their animal philosophy of the survival of the fittest. They betrayed their brothers. You see, when Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem, the inhabitants scattered and many of them fled to the rugged country of Edom where they could hide. The Edomites, standing at the crossroads, would betray their hiding places. When the Babylonian soldiers were hot on their trail, the Edomites would say, "Yes, we saw a bunch of Israelites come by here. They went that way. You'll find them holed up in that canyon." They betrayed their brothers.

Not long ago a businessman in Los Angeles, California, told me that the business world is "dog-eat-dog." That is what man has come to by living without God. Man wants to make a name for himself. He wants to make money. He wants to be a success. What is in back of it? Pride. What is pride? It is an attitude of living life without God. It leads men to betray others. It will cause people to betray fellow workers in order to obtain their jobs. Many men pretend to be friends when, in fact, they are enemies. There are many men in government today who will betray at the drop of a hat. It is sickening when you take a good look at our society today.

Although I hate to say it, there is also pride in the church. I was a pastor for over forty years and served with many wonderful, faithful men upon whom I could depend. But I learned to my sorrow that, when I had a member on the staff who was a proud young man, he would bear watching. A proud young man trying to get on in the world is willing to climb the ladder of success by stepping on the fingers of those who are below him.

And every now and then I would add a man to my staff who, for personal advancement, would even be willing to put a knife in my back although I had been helpful to him.

The head of the Church of England was speaking to a bishop many years ago when he made this statement which has a double meaning, "Every bishop has a crook on his staff." Primarily he was referring to the crook on a shepherd's staff which is used to correct the sheep, but he was also saying that every bishop had a crook in his staff of helpers. There would always be at least one who would try to put a knife in the bishop's back.

Do you see now why God hates pride? It leads men to act like animals -- in fact, the horrible truth is that when a man attempts to live without God, he is lower than animals. Therefore, the Book of Obadiah is God's devastating answer to the theory of the evolution of the species. What consummate conceit of man, living apart from God, to think that he has evolved from an animal when he is living like an animal. He boasts, "I have evolved from the animal world, and look at me today!" In effect, God says, "Do you really know where you have come from? I created you in My own image, and you fell -- you fell so low that you are below the animal world." Repeatedly God says that He hates pride, and He has never asked me to apologize for Him.

To see the final issue of Edom and Israel, come with me to the time of Christ. I see a man walking by the Sea of Galilee, over the dusty roads of Samaria, and through the narrow streets of Jerusalem. His name is Jesus. He is in the line of Jacob. Also, I see a man on the throne during those years. His name is Herod, and the Scriptures are very careful to identify him -- Herod, the Idumaean, the Edomite, in the line of Esau. When a warning came to the Lord Jesus to flee because Herod would kill Him, He said, "Go tell that fox. . . ." Fox? Yes. "Go, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out demons, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall have finished" ([Luke 13:32](#), New Scofield Reference Bible). And when the Lord Jesus was finally brought before him for judgment, He wouldn't even open His mouth before Herod. There they stand, Jesus and Herod, the final issue of Jacob and Esau.

Catastrophe To Edom (1:15-16)

For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head [[Obad. 1:15](#)].

"For the day of the LORD is near." Let me remind you that the phrase, "day of the LORD," is a technical expression which covers a period of time beginning with the Great Tribulation period. You and I are living in the day of grace or the day of Christ. The emphasis in our day is upon the Holy Spirit who takes the things of Christ and shows them unto us. After the removal of true believers (collectively called the church), the Day of the Lord will begin, and it will begin with the darkness and judgment of the Great Tribulation period. Following that terrible time, the Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in His wings, which will be the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth to establish His kingdom here.

"For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen" -- that is, all the nations. When the Lord Jesus Christ has come to earth to establish His kingdom, there will be a judgment of the nations, described by our Lord Himself in [Matthew 25](#). Now, very

frankly, it is not clear whether the ancient nations of the past, which have long since disappeared from view, will be raised for this judgment or if their judgment will be the final judgment at the Great White Throne (see [Rev. 20:11-15](#)). I find that the commentators differ on this, but I'll give you my private viewpoint. When I go out on a limb, you better not go with me because my limb may break off, but it is my opinion that when Obadiah says, "The day of the LORD is near upon all the nations," he means that Edom will again become a nation during the end times. If you doubt that this is possible, look at the nation Israel. For twenty-five hundred years Israel was not a nation, but in 1948 she again became a nation. When Obadiah says that the Day of the Lord is near upon all nations, I interpret that as meaning all the nations, including the ancient nations which will come back into existence and will be judged.

Some expositors believe that Edom will experience the full wrath of God when the Lord Jesus Himself executes the judgment of God upon Edom and her allies (see [Isa. 63:1-6](#)).

You see, a nation is responsible to God. The Word of God makes that clear. For example, in [Deuteronomy 21:1-3](#) we read: "If one be found slain in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it, lying in the field, and it be not known who hath slain him: Then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which are round about him that is slain: And it shall be, that the city which is next unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take an heifer, which hath not been wrought with, and which hath not drawn in the yoke." In other words, when a man was found slain out on the highway, they were to measure to determine which city was closest to that slain man, and that city was responsible for taking over the case and attempting to find out who killed that man. I think that is a great principle that God put down.

Christians talk about their citizenship being in heaven; and it's true that the Head of the church is in heaven, but the feet of the church are on earth. Christians have a responsibility as citizens of the nation of which they are members to exert an influence for God as much as they can. I don't mean to say that a Christian should jump into politics, but I do believe that God could use many more genuine, Bible-believing Christians on the political scene. Some folk say that politics has become so dirty that no Christian should get involved in them. Well, I am of the opinion that a real Christian, willing to stand on his two feet and be counted, could be used by God in our governmental processes. Our nation is responsible to God, and we are part of it.

This does not mean that God will judge nations on the basis of whether or not they have accepted or rejected Christ because never yet has any nation accepted Christ wholeheartedly. It is a mistake to speak of any nation as a Christian nation. While it is true that Christians have had a great influence on nations like England and our own country, they never were truly Christian nations, and certainly both are far from God at the present time.

"As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head." Edom was destroyed just as Obadiah had predicted. First it was captured by Babylon some time after Jerusalem was destroyed. That was accomplished by getting spies inside the capital, Petra, the impregnable fortress-city. Later, Maccabees further subjugated Edom, and finally, the Romans destroyed Edom when they destroyed

Jerusalem in B.C. 70. At that time Edom as a nation disappeared from the world scene and has not been heard of since.

Whether or not Edom will live again as a nation is debatable and makes no real difference to you and me. If Edom is around during the Millennium, I'll be happy; and if it is not, I'll still be happy because I know that God is working out His own plan.

For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the
heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall
swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been
[Obad. 1:16].

In other words, God says to Edom, "As you have done, it is going to be done to you. You will be rewarded in the same way." This is what we call today poetic justice. Lex talionis is the law of retaliation. The Lord Jesus said, "As you judge, so shall you be judged" (see [Matt. 7:1](#)). Or, "Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap" (see [Gal. 6:7](#)). Edom will suffer in the same ways that she caused others to suffer. I very frankly shudder when I consider that my nation was the first nation to drop an atom bomb and that we have been a warlike nation. I do not think that God lets any nation get by with that. The history of all nations confirms that as they have dealt it out, in a similar way it has come back to them. This is something which has worked itself out throughout the history of the world.

In [verses 17](#) through 21 we come to the second and last major division of the Book of Obadiah. It is only a few verses, and it concerns the nation Israel. For Edom it was destruction, but for Israel it is to be restoration. The little nation of Israel fits into the program of almighty God. Everything fits into the program of almighty God. For every individual, it does not matter who you are, the interesting thing is that had not God thought of you, you wouldn't be around. You were in the mind of God. The great question is: Are you going to be in step with Him? Are you going to move into eternity with Him or against Him? His plan and program will be carried out, and you will do well to be on His side.

Condition Of Israel (1:17)

Although God judged Israel, they were not to be destroyed as a nation --

But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be
holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions
[Obad. 1:17].

"But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance." Salvation is to be offered upon Mount Zion for the world. That is where it is offered to you and me today. The Lord Jesus came and died on Golgotha for you and me. He is coming back to this earth again. Although we are told that at that time His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives, He will be coming into Jerusalem, and He will, I believe, rule from the top of Mount Zion.

"And there shall be holiness." There is no holiness there today. I have been on Mount Zion half a dozen times, and I have not found any holiness there. They are just as far from God there as they are over in the Arab section of the old city of Jerusalem. There is no holiness there today, but there shall be holiness when the Lord Jesus reigns.

"And the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions." I like this expression. They are not possessing their possessions today. They are in the land -- that's true. They have a nation -- that's true. They've returned to the land, but they have not returned to God, and as a result they do not possess their possessions. There is a great deal of difference between having a possession and possessing it.

Conflagration Of The House Of Esau (1:18)

And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau, for the LORD hath spoken it [[Obad. 1:18](#)].

There will be ultimate, final judgment of Esau. I believe that "the house of Esau" is a kingdom that will not enter into the eternal kingdoms of this earth which will become the kingdoms of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. What is it that keeps them from being there? Pride of heart -- that attitude of a life that declares its ability to live without God. Friend, if it is your decision to live without God, you are going to live without Him not only now but throughout eternity.

Consummation Of All Things (1:19-21)

And they of the south shall possess the mount of Esau; and they of the plain the Philistines: and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria: and Benjamin shall possess Gilead [[Obad. 1:19](#)].

The southern section of Judah will expand to possess "the mount of Esau." Those on the west will include the coastland of the Philistines. "The fields of Ephraim, and . . . Samaria" -- that is, the northern kingdom -- will be restored to the nation, and Benjamin will include Gilead, which is on the east bank of the Jordan River.

And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel shall possess that of the Canaanites, even unto Zarephath; and the captivity of Jerusalem, which is in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south [[Obad. 1:20](#)].

Zarephath is way up north between Tyre and Sidon in Lebanon. "The cities of the south" refers to Negeb, the southern part, actually, the Sinaitic peninsula. Israel will occupy all the land that God promised to them. He had promised to Abraham a land that contains about three hundred thousand square miles. Even at their zenith, they occupied only about thirty thousand square miles.

And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD'S [[Obad. 1:21](#)].

"Saviours" should be translated "deliverers."

"And the kingdom shall be the LORD'S." God is moving forward today undeviatingly, unhesitatingly toward the accomplishment of His purpose; that is, of putting His King on Mount Zion. He says that He will turn and turn and overturn the nations until He comes whose right it is to rule (see [Ezek. 21:27](#)).

Nothing can deter or detour or defer God in His plan and in His program. No son of Esau, no animal, can stop Him. No proud man walking this earth can cause God to relinquish or retreat one inch. He is moving today to victory. The Kingdom is the Lord's!

There is only One who can lift the heads of men and women wailing through life with their heads down like animals (only humans look up as they walk; animals look down). Evolution has not lifted mankind one inch. Look at our world that has been schooled in this godless philosophy. The deadly poison of godless materialism and humanism will bring upon us the judgment of God! God says, "Though you be lifted up, little man, I'll bring you down."

But He also says, through the lips of His Son, or Savior: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" ([John 12:32](#)). Which way are you going, my friend? Down the way of pride, pessimism, unbelief and rebellion, down, down, down? You who were made in the likeness of God can be restored. You will have to lay aside your pride and come in helplessness to His Savior. He can lift you.

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